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NEWS In the News

New Study Results Underscore Need for AEDs in Public Places

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October 22, 2002 — Recent results published in *The New England Journal of Medicine* emphasize the importance of publicly accessible automated external defibrillators or AEDs, a conclusion which echoes Red Cross training objectives.

Conducted over a two year period at three Chicago airports, the study recorded a 67 percent survival rate among those who experienced sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) and received CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) and AED treatment within five minutes.

Such study results unmistakably demonstrate that AEDs can be a critical tool in saving a life endangered by SCA. In a situation reflective of the study, a man collapsed while experiencing SCA, and those who responded utilized a nearby AED.

"Having the Red Cross training and the AED with the instructions printed on it helped us remain calm," said Chuck Hoffman, a Starbucks employee who administered life-saving emergency techniques to the SCA victim. "The definite benefit of having the AED machine is that it analyzed [the victim] and let us know exactly what was happening."

AEDs allow individuals with minimal training to respond to cardiac emergencies, particularly SCA's. The lunch box-sized containers house adhesive electrode pads that deliver brief electrical stimulation to the chest, interrupting the abnormal heart rhythms and restoring normal function. Pre-programmed for heart electrical analysis, the devices use voice prompts and a display screen to ensure effective operation.

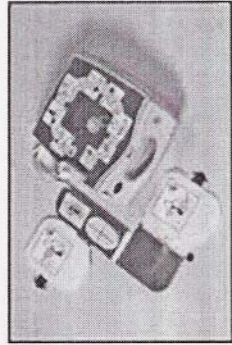
Although AEDs functions are relatively uncomplicated, the Red Cross maintains that training in the Cardiac Chain of Survival remains imperative. Recognition of emergencies, 9-1-1 calls, proper CPR performance, and early defibrillation through the AED usage remain the critical steps in crisis SCA situations.

Red Cross chapters nationwide utilize a network of over 350,000 trained instructors, equipping approximately 4 million people annually with life-saving Cardiac Chain of Survival techniques.

The American Heart Association reports that sudden cardiac arrest victims who receive immediate CPR and an AED shock within 3 to 5



A Red Cross trainee practices using an AED.



An Automated External Defibrillator or AED.

minutes have survival rates as high as 48 to 74 percent. Considering that SCA strikes as many as 250,000 Americans each year, an estimated 50,000 lives could be saved through CPR and AED training and widespread AED distribution.

As a result, the American Red Cross has implemented Project Lifesaver: Increasing Public Access to Defibrillation. This public service initiative is designed to help communities train and educate its residents in AED use, while supporting complimentary state and federal legislation and expansive circulation of the devices.

The Red Cross envisions at least one person in every household being trained in first aid, CPR, and defibrillator use, as well as every American being within four minutes of a defibrillator. The American Red Cross anticipates a vast deployment of equipped lay responders who will help save lives when emergencies arise, especially in public areas such as shopping malls, airports, stadiums, and worksites.

Ordinary people can be lifesavers, with the help of AEDs and training from the Red Cross.

All American Red Cross disaster assistance is free, made possible by voluntary donations of time and money from the American people. The Red Cross also supplies nearly half of the nation's lifesaving blood. This, too, is made possible by generous voluntary donations. You can help the victims of thousands of disasters across the country each year by making a financial gift to the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund, which enables the Red Cross to provide shelter, food, counseling and other assistance to those in need. You can make a secure online credit card donation or call 1-800-HELP NOW (1-800-435-7669) or 1-800-257-7575 (Spanish). Or you may send your donation to your local Red Cross or to the American Red Cross, P.O. Box 37243, Washington, D.C. 20013. To donate blood, please call 1-800-GIVE-LIFE (1-800-448-3543), or contact your local Red Cross to find out about upcoming blood drives.